

Inquiry into participation levels in sport in Wales – Additional Questions

1. To what extent would the NUT agree with criticism from the FAW that the School Sport Survey is dependent on the buy-in of schools and as such can lead to wide variances and gaps in area responses?

We agree that if all local authorities and schools don't buy into the School Sport Survey then the results will not be a true reflection of what is happening across Wales. I mentioned in my evidence session that I feel that the 50,000 completed surveys mentioned by Sport Wales is nowhere near enough in order to get the true picture. In January 2012 there were 465,943 school children in Wales so only 10.7% of children took part in the survey in 2011. And if the majority of the participants are from one area then the FAW are correct in their view that it can lead to a wide variance in responses.

We also fully understand the pressures that head teachers and teachers are under and that allowing time during the day to allow all children to participate in the survey would mean that other things would need to be postponed. If the survey is to be a valuable one then its importance must be stressed to all head teachers so that they are then willing to allow time for it to be properly completed by the whole school and not just one class or one year group.

2. In the NUT's written submission, you said that there is a need 'to research the participation rates of those included in the different equality strands and more so those children who live in the deprived areas in Wales'. Can you expand on your specific concerns?

The concern here is that in the last survey conducted by Sport Wales in 2011 they only compare boys and girls participation rates and have no comparison between children who are included in different equality strands (disabled, BME, etc). They also have no comparison on certain areas within the local authorities that took part. They have looked at the local authority in which the children live and made comparisons with other local authorities but we feel they should be more specific and focus on the areas within each local authority as this will give them a clearer picture of who is participating.

What we are looking for is to see if there is a difference in participation based on the area that you live in so that we can see if a significant difference exists between those children from low income families who live in deprived areas and those children who live in more affluent areas. Our belief is that children from low income families will tend to participate less due to budgetary constraints (affordability) and lack of good local sports facilities.

There is also no information on how many responses were received from pupils which are included in the different equality strands (such as disabled children, BME children) to see what their responses were to the questions asked. If this information was known then Sport Wales could look at tackling any problems which lead to a lack of participation by these children.

3. How confident is the NUT that Sport Wales's Community Sport and Child Poverty Strategies will start to address the barriers those from lower socio-economic background face in participating in sport?

We have no doubt whatsoever that if Sport Wales meet all the objectives laid out in their Community Sport Strategy 2012-2020, which includes Community Sport and Child Poverty, that the barriers they have identified can be broken and that considerably more children from a lower socio economic background will be able to have the opportunity to participate in sport.

4. Show Racism the Red card told the Committee that there is only one BME PE teacher in Wales. Can you confirm if this is correct and do you have any concerns about the number of BME PE teachers in Welsh schools and how should this be addressed? Do you have any suggestions for ways to increase the visibility of BME role models in schools?

I'm unable to confirm if this is correct as our membership system does not specify what subject each member specialises in, plus there are other unions apart from the NUT that have members in schools. Over 50% of the teachers in Wales are NUT members, with the other 5 unions/associations having a share of the remaining 50%. However, if Show Racism the Red Card have researched this issue then I'm willing to accept their findings as I know them to be an excellent organisation who do fantastic work with pupils in Welsh schools about the problems of racism and how to tackle those issues.

We do have a concern about the low number of BME PE teachers and I think that to address this problem we need to look at the amount of BME graduates who have undertaken a course, be it a Post Graduate Certificate of Education in Primary or Secondary Physical Education, and see how many from a BME background have actually undertaken the training compared to how many have been appointed to a full or part time post here in Wales. But we must also remember that students from England, Ireland, Scotland and other countries also come to Wales to do their teacher training qualification and then return to their country of origin to pursue their career.

If we have only one BME PE teacher in Wales then it is probably very difficult to increase the visibility of BME role models in schools, unless a BME teacher who teaches a different subject, who is also a keen sportsperson, assists the PE department with extra-curricular activities. If this isn't possible then the school would need to look into bringing someone who is a valued and respected sportsperson in the local community to the school to either assist with extra-curricular activities or just to talk to the BME children about their experiences and how they broke any barriers they faced in order to succeed.

On a positive note, there is no shortage of professional BME sportsmen and women who children could look to as being a role model. Mo Farah, Christine Ohurugu (athletics) and Ashley Young (football) are all professionals who are very much in the public eye and set great examples for our children.

5. Sport Wales has identified the provision of sport in school as one of three fundamental factors that needs addressing in order to raise participation levels. How would the NUT respond specifically to Sport Wales comments that:
- i) There is a need for teachers to focus more on providing children with the right skills to participate, rather than just focusing on providing the activity itself;
 - ii) That delivery of school sport needs to be more inclusive, with teachers needing confidence and appropriate training to deliver the provision, and head teachers needing to set the right ethos in this respect?
- i) A balance needs to be established here. If we want children to participate regularly in sport then we must make it enjoyable for them to do so, therefore providing an activity which they are going to enjoy will ultimately mean that they are going to participate. If they have an interest in that sport then they will participate anyway and they will want to know how to perform to the best of their ability and therefore they will need to be taught the skills needed to be a better performer. All PE teachers differentiate during lessons, making it easier for those less able to learn a skill and challenging the more talented with more complex skills. If they are better than average and that they'd like to improve their performance further then they must be provided with the right skills and guidance in order to allow them to move on to the next level. Back in the 1970's and 1980's PE lessons were all about taking part and playing games and not about skill acquisition and assessing each pupil (in Key Stage 2 and 3) on his/her ability and then labelling them with a level of competence. This does not happen in Key Stage 4 as year 10 and 11 pupils, in the majority of school in Wales, only receive 1 hour of PE instead of the minimum of 2 (unless they choose PE at GCSE) which is stipulated in the National Curriculum. The structure of the PE lesson then changed to skill acquisition in the late 1990's therefore what Sport Wales are asking for is what actually happens in schools at the moment and has done for a number of years. This is true for the traditional sports and any sport in which the individual PE teacher is skilled and has experience in performing. In order to increase participation it's possible that we need to move away from assessing pupil competence or incompetence and making PE lessons more enjoyable, as it's those pupils who feel inferior are the ones who stop participating.
- ii) As children are now interested in many different sports and physical activities and not just the traditional sports, and in order to deliver high quality lessons in these activities, PE teachers must be given the appropriate training in those activities in order to successfully deliver them. This will ensure that the provision within schools will be fully inclusive. This cannot be done without the full support of the head teacher as the PE teachers will need to be released from their lessons in order to access the training, and this can be expensive for the school in relation to paying for supply teachers. In order to teach these new and different activities the PE departments must have access to facilities and be able to purchase resources in order deliver them successfully. Initially, this could prove expensive. Therefore, once again, the full support of the head teacher is essential in order to spend what's required in order to be able to provide the correct resources.

In reality, with school budgets being cut, head teachers won't be able to afford to spend the money required in order to make this possible. Therefore, funding from other sources, such as Sport Wales and the Welsh Government, should be made available to ensure that all schools can provide what their pupils want.

6. To what extent would the NUT say that schools are currently responding effectively to other barriers to sport that have been identified in evidence, such as:
- i) The need to provide the same opportunities for disabled and non-disabled pupils;
 - ii) The need to tackle issues facing LGBT pupils and those from BME communities.

As a union we haven't looked into these issues but we will comment on the points made with some suggestions on how they can be tackled.

- i) With school budgets being cut, it's very difficult for schools to be able to spend what is required in order to ensure that they can provide the same for disabled and non-disabled pupils as the disabled pupils will need specialised equipment in order to participate safely and this equipment could be very expensive. All PE teachers differentiate during lessons and this happens more so when a disabled pupil is included in the group. With the assistance of teaching assistants, PE teachers can and do ensure that disabled pupils receive the physical education they deserve within the constraints of the resources and facilities they have to hand. With more funding, more can be achieved but we believe that schools are doing all they can in order to break down this barrier.
- ii) All schools are aware of their responsibilities towards their pupils in ensuring that they all receive positive experiences during their time at school. PE teachers should also be aware of their responsibilities in ensuring that they tackle issues where non-participation in sport by LGBT and BME pupils are encountered. PE teachers may need some training on how to deal with these issues effectively and in order to do so the school needs to invite outside bodies, such as Stonewall and Show Racism the Red Card, to deliver some training and give guidance on how to deal with them. By educating the educators these barriers and issues can be overcome.